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ABSTRACT

An analysis of Kilega, a Bantu language spoken in eastern Zaire, focuses on the relative positions of subject and verb and agreement patterns, with particular attention to WH-movement. It is found that Kilega is a subject-verb-object language, but exhibits some variant patterns. WH-movement triggers verb-subject inversion and shifts agreement. The verb then agrees with the WH-word, which has been moved to the initial position of the sentence. There is thus a syntactic interest to see why subject-verb agreement is blocked in this process. Two reasons are proposed: (1) that lexical noun phrase is inert, and therefore agreement would be blocked as a result of verb movement; and (2) that WH-movement is by adjunction. Specific examples are offered. (MSE)

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SUBJECT-VERB POSITION and AGREEMENT SHIFT in KILEGA.[1]

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the results of an analysis which was made on data collected from KILEGA (a Bantu language spoken in the eastern part of Zaire). The investigation focused on the position of the subject and the verb and agreement patterns. Particular attention was paid to what is known in the literature as 'WH-movement'. It was found that KILEGA is a SVO language, but it exhibits some VSOY patterns. WH-movement triggers verb-subject inversion, and shifts agreement. Interestingly, the verb agrees with the WH-word which has been moved to the initial position of the sentence. There is thus a syntactic interest to understand why S-V agreement is blocked in this process. It seems there are two reasons for this. First, it is argued that lexical NP* is inert, and therefore agreement would be blocked as a result of verb movement, and secondly, it is posited that WH-movement is by adjunction, and therefore would not enter a SPEC-head relationship with Infl.

INTRODUCTION

Koopman and Sportiche (1991) make a detailed analysis of what the position of the NP subject is in a sentence. Their analysis focuses on whether the subject is generated as [SPEC IP], or whether it is generated in the VP, and moved to [SPEC IP]. Specifically, they wanted to know whether the [SPEC IP] position was an A-position or an A'-position. Of interest to me in this article among other things is the statement that Koopman and Sportiche make on Arabic, "nothing other than the subject can move to immediate preverbal position and trigger verbal agreement" (Koopman and Sportiche 1991:249). In KILEGA, and this is the focus of this paper, when a WH-word is moved to initial position of a sentence, not only does it trigger Verb-Subject inversion, but also it shifts agreement. The verb agrees with the moved WH-word. A similar argument is presented by Woolford (1991), who points out that SVO analysis of sentence structure has long been argued for because it was the only configuration structure possible within the theory at that time.

A few studies have been done on Kilega (Meeussen 1971a, Kinyalolo 1991). Kinyalolo (1991) is a comprehensive study of Kilega, but more attention is needed to particular aspects of the language,with the hope that some contribution may be made to the arena of studies in linguistic theory.

I. WORD ORDER PATTERN AND AGREEMENT

1 a. bana b-a-kandul-ile tukwe tu-a nyama walubi
children SA open past parcels agr of meat yesterday
'children opened parcels of meat yesterday'

b. mwami a-ku-seg-a mpene
chief SA ask goat
'the chief is asking a goat'

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c. kasuku ka-soga ka-ku-bang-ak-a bubo
resin torch agr nice SA light hab that
'a nice resin torch always lights that way'

d. tusuku tu-soga tu-ku-bang-ak-a bubo
resin torches agr nice SA light hab that
nice resin torches always light that way

e. ni-ku-kit-ag-a bubo
1sg do hab that
' I always do that' (Kinyalolo 1991)

f. u- ku-kit-ag-a bubo
2sg do hab that
'you always do that' (Kinyalolo 1991)

g. masunga ma-li-u-a na nyama
yams SA eat pass by animal
'yams were/are eaten by animals'

The sentences in 1 show that the verb bears the agreement marker of the subject (1a,b,c,d,g) in SVO structures, and adjectives also (when there are any) bear the agreemnet marker of the NP they modify (as in 1c,d). When the subject is not lexical, the verb bears the agreement marker which adentifies the subject, as in 1e,f.

II. WH-MOVEMENT IN KILEGA

A. IN ROOT CLAUSES

Consider:

2 a. Bana b-a-kandul-ile tukwe tu-a nyama walubi
children SA open past parcels agr of meat yesterday
'children opened packages of meat yesterday'

b. biki bi-a-kandul-ile bana walubi

what agr open past children yesterday
'what did the children open yesterday ?'

c. Buni bu-a-kandul-ile bana tukwe tu-a nyama ?

When (how) agr- open past children packages agr of meat ?

'When did the children open packages of meat ?
'how'

d. Tukwe tu-kizi tu-a-kandul-ile bana walubi?
packages agr what agr-open-past children yesterday ?
(what packages did the children open yesterday?)

e. nazi u-a-kandul-ile tukwe tu-a nyama walubi?
who SA open past parcels agr of meat yesterday
who opened parcels of meat yesterday?

f. ba -nazi b-a-kandul-ile tukwe tu-a nyama walubi?
agr who SA open past parcels agr of meat yesyerday?
who opened parcels of meat yesterday?

It can be observed in 2b,c,d, above that WH-movement triggers verb-subject inversion in Kilega as can be seen in the positions of [*b-a-ndul-ile*] (VERB) and [*bana]* (SUBJECT). Agreement also shifts. In 2a, the verb shows agreement with the subject [bana] S [B-a -kandul-ile] V; but in 2b,c,d, the verb shows agreement with the WH-word. 2e,f, are instantiations where the subject is questioned. In Kilega, the subject marker in a wh-sentence [+human, singular] is *u-*. The plural follows the regular pattern mentioned above.

It is interesting to notice at this stage of the discussion that the verb cannot take both agreements at the same time (ie agreement with the lexical subject [BANA] and with the WH-phrase [*biki]* or [*buni]* or [*tukwe tu-kizi*] as can be seen in the ungrammaticality of 2g,h,i below.

g. * Tukwe tu-kizi tu- ba- kandul-ile bana walubi?

h. * Buni bu-ba-kandul-ile bana tukwe tu-a nyama?

i. * Biki bi-ba- kandul-ile bana?

Consider again :

3 a. Bana ba- ku- kit-a biki mu nyumba ?
children agr-prog-do what in house ?
'What are the children doing in the house?'

b. Biki bi-ku-kit-a bana mu nyumba?
what agr-prog-do children in the house?
'What are the children doing in the house?

c. * BA-ku-kita bana biki mu nyumba?

When the WH-phrase *biki* is kept in object position (in situ) as in 3a above, you still have an acceptable and grammatical question sentence in Kilega, but then there is no inversion of the subject and the verb, and there is no agreement shift. Attempt to do so results in ungrammaticality as can be seen in 3c.

Consider now :

4 a. Tukwe tu-kizi tu- ba- kandul-ile walubi ?
Packages what agr-SA-open past yesterday ?
'What packages did they open yesterday?'

b. Biki bi- ba- ku- kit-a mu nyumba ?
What agr-SA-prog do in house?'
'What are they doing in the house?'

It was said in 2g,h,i that the Verb cannot take both agreements (with the subject and with the WH-word) at the same time, but this is only true when the subject is a lexical NP. When the subject is not lexical, the verb must bear both the agreement marker of the WH-word that has undergone movement to the beginning of the sentence and that of the subject NP, as in 4a,b above, and only in that order (ie first comes the agreement marker of the WH-word, then the agreement marker of the subject NP). What I want to stress here is that in Kilega, whether lexical or non-lexical, the subject NP of a sentence must be identified. A sentence without subject NP is both ungrammatical and meaningless as illustrated in 4c below.

4c. * Biki bi-ku-kit-a mu nyumba ?
What agr-prog-do in house ?
'*What doing in house?'

d. Biki bi- ba- m- imb-ile nabyo?
what agr SA OM beat with?
what did they beat him with?

4d is an illustration that the subject marker should not be confused with the object pronoun (or object marker). In 4d, *ba* is the subject marker, and *-m-* is the object pronoun. When both are present in the verb complex, first comes the subject marker, and then the object marker.

B. IN EMBEDDED CLAUSES

Consider :

5a. [Tata a-tenda [BUNO [batende ba-ku-sega mpene]]]
Father SA say THAT initiates agr- ask goat
'My father says that the initiates are asking/will ask a goat'

b. [BIKI [bi-a-tenda tata [BUNO [batende ba-kusega t]]]]
CPa IP CPb IP

WH-word *biki* has been moved to initial position, triggering Subject-Verb inversion in CPa where it has been moved, and not in CPb where it has been extracted from. A question that comes to mind immediately is: was there a one step movement of the WH-phrase from the extraction site to the landing site, thereby crossing CPb, or did it land in CPb before moving to CPa position ? The latter possibility is presumably to be excluded because if it had landed in CPb, it could have triggered Subject-Verb inversion.

The following example obviously gives more insights :

6a. [Tata a-tenda [[batende ba-ku-sega mpene]
CPa CPb IP
[Father says [[initiates agr- ask goat]]
'My father says the initiates are asking/will ask a goat'

b. [BIKI [bi-a-tenda tata [[bi-ku-sega batende t]]]]
CPa IP CPb IP

6b illustrates the following facts:

1. There is no complementizer BUNO in the sentence.
2. There is Subject-Verb inversion in both IP
3. It can therefore be argued here that there have been successive movements of the WH-phrase from the extraction site to CPb, and from CPb to CPa. This is an obvious case of successive cyclic movement.

Consider again :

6c. [BIKI [bi-a-tenda tata [[batende ba-ku-sega t]]]]
CPa IPa CPb IPb

6d. * [Biki [bi-a-tenda tata [BUNO [ki-ku-sega batende t]]]]
CPa IPa CPb IPb

The observation that can be made here is that 6c is acceptable in Kilega, but notice that there has been WH-movement with Subject-Verb inversion in CPa, but not in CPb. If we collapse 6b and 6c, we can say that when there is NO overt complementizer [BUNO, that], Subject-Verb inversion is obligatory in CPa

(landing site clause), and optional in the extraction site clause (here CPb). But this leaves open the question whether successive cyclic movement is obligatory or optional.

The ungrammaticality of 6d results in the presence of the complementizer BUNO (that). This is what explains the obligatory nature of successive cyclic movement. By landing at CPb, we could have :

6e * Tata a-tenda [BIKI [BUNO [bi-ku-sega batende t]]]
CPa CPb IP
*Father says WHAT THAT ask the initiates

This is ungrammatical in this reading[2] , and the ungrammaticality is accounted for, like in English, by the "doubly filled COMP filter". No two elements can occupy the same position. Because the COMP position is already filled with BUNO, no other element can occupy that position (Haegeman 1991).
Successive cyclic movement with Subject-Verb inversion does not operate when there is an open complementizer.

The examples above have showed that there are cases of grammaticality through successive cyclic movement; that there are cases of grammaticality (possibly) without successive cyclic movement; and finally, there are cases of ungrammaticality with complementizers.

Torrego (1984) in his study of Spanish WH-movement accounts for the grammaticality of 7a below by successive cyclic movement, triggering obligatory inversion of the subject and the verb at each movement. As for 7b, grammaticality is accounted for by an exception rule " inversion in the deepest clause (the one containing an argument trace) is optional" (Torrego, 1984).

7 a. Que piensa Juan [[que[habia dicho la familia[[que [les habian aconsejado los amigos [que[estudiara su hija]]]]]

Who does John think that the family has said that their friends had counseled them that their daughter study?

b. Que piensa Juan [[que [habia dicho la familia [[que[les habian aconsejado los amigos [[que [su hija estudiara]]]]

[2] There is another reading in which the complementizer BUNO should not read THAT but ELSE. Here is an example: Tata a-u-itosh-a biki buno bi-ku-seg-a batende (Father wonders what else the initiates will ask).

Similarly, I posit that, in Kilega, Verb-Subject inversion is obligatory in the landing site clause; it is optional in all other clauses NOT containing an open complementizer in its COMP position. Where there is a complementizer in the COMP, NO inversion is possible in that clause.

8 a. [Tata a- ku- i- tosh-a [KULI [ku-na-kul-ile zino mpene]
CP IP
Father SA-prog-refl-ask WHERE agr -SA-buy-past this goat
'My father wonders where I bought this goat.

The object NP [zino mpene] cannot be questioned without causing ungrammaticality.

b. *[BIKI [bi-ku-i-tosha tata [[KULI [ku-na-kul-ile t1]]]]
CPa IP CPb IP
What agr refl-ask father where I bought t1
*What does my father wonder where I bought?

This is evidence that in Kilega, WH-movement has constraints, and I posit that CP with an open complementizer is a bounding node (constraints on movement is not the major concern of this paper. Agreement shift is).

C. ACCOUNTING FOR AGREEMENT SHIFT

a. position of the NP subject.

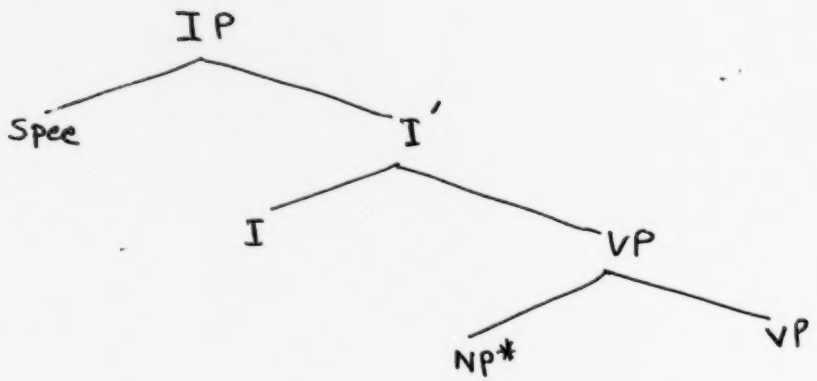
It is assumed that in Kilega, the Spec of IP is generated empty, and that the thematic subject is generated inside the VP (Kinyalolo 1991, Woolford 1991). Evidence for this is that in KIlega, an object NP can be preposed in an active sentence. 8a is an instance of this.

8a. maku ta- ma-ku- sol- ak-a mtu wenene
beer NEG agr prog drink hab person alone
'a person does not drink beer alone' (advice)

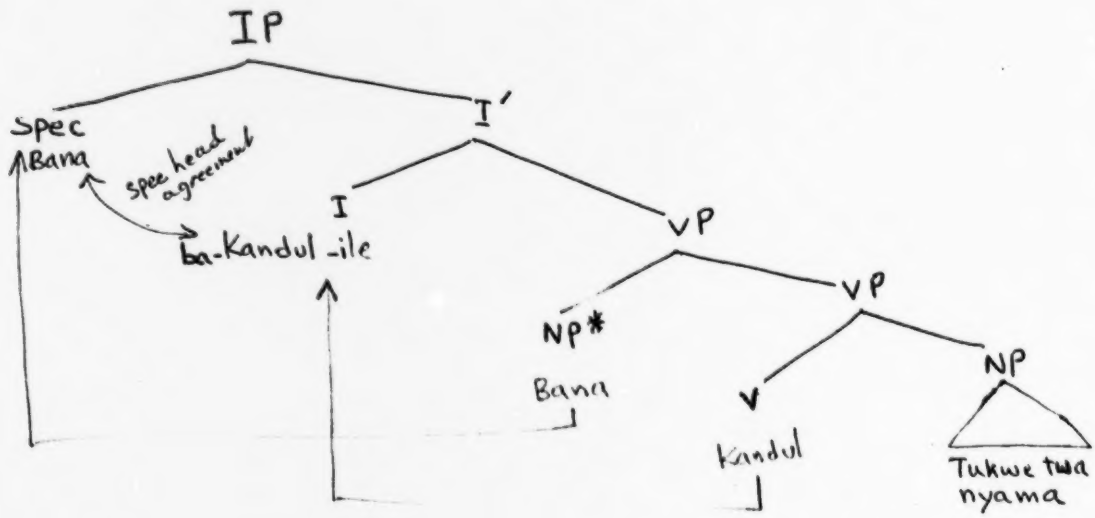
Similarly, a locative can be preposed in an active sentence, as in 8b

8b. zizo nzila ta-zi-ku-ting-ak-a amo mtu wenene
that road NEG agr prog pass hab in person alone
'a person does not normally go alone on that road' (advice)

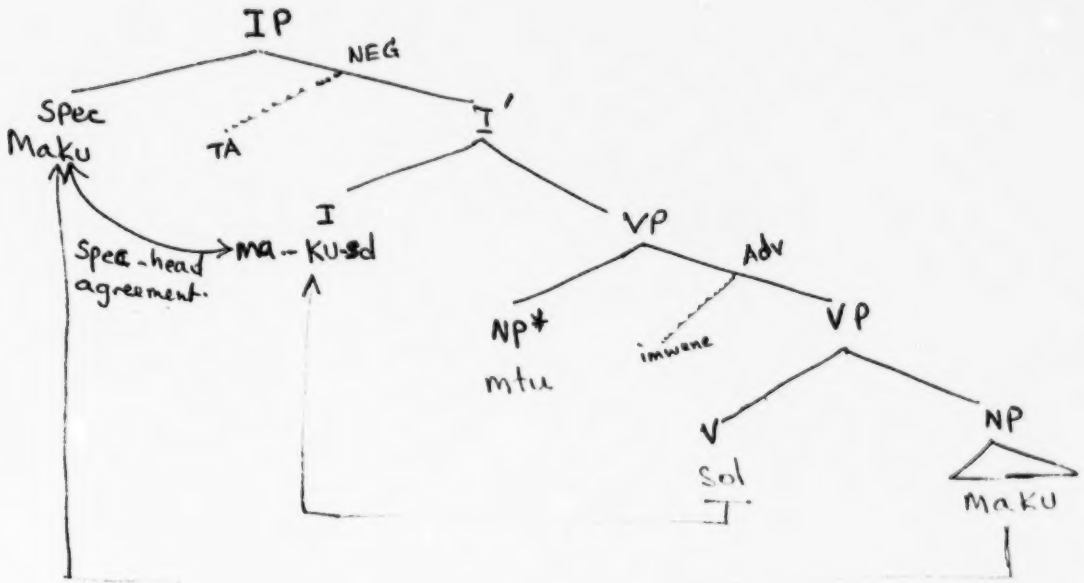
9a Proposed Sentence structure (Kinyalolo 1991
(Koopman & Sportiche 1991)



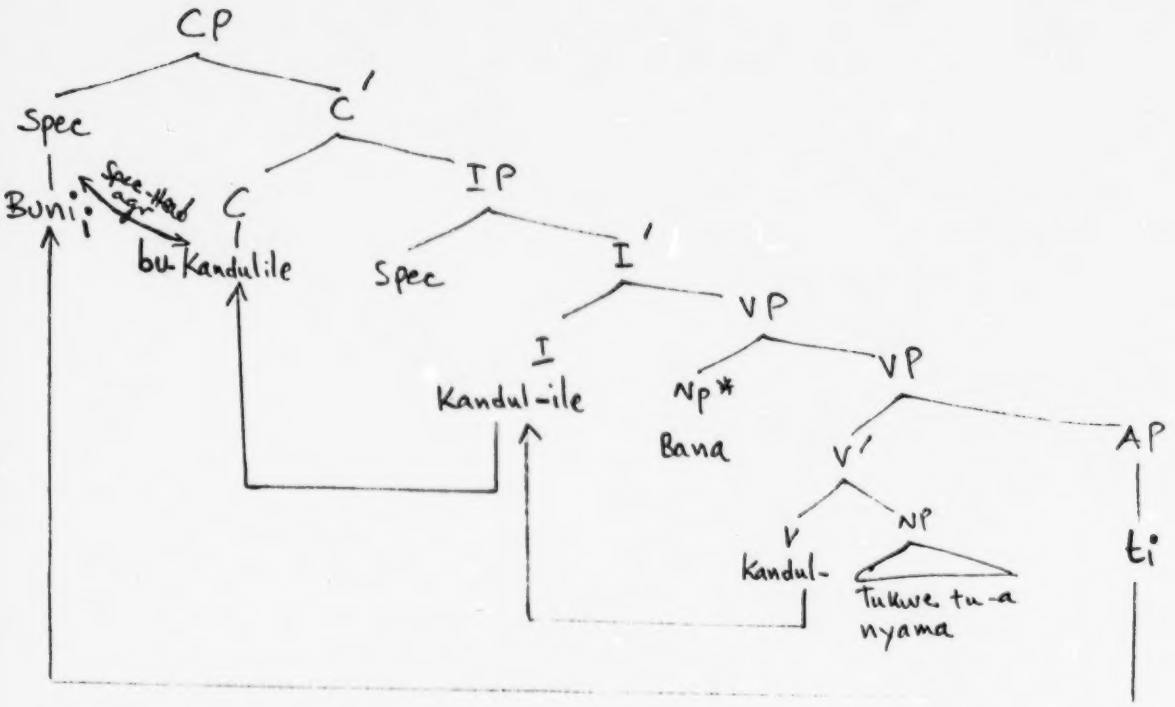
10b Bana b-a-Kandul-ile tukwe tu-a nyama



10c **Object Preposing:** Maku ta-ma-KU-sol-ak-a mtu imwene



10 d. Wh- movement: Buni bu-a- kandul-ile bana tukwe tu-a nyama



As the thematic subject is generated inside the VP, the Spec of IP can serve as target for NP movement even in active clauses (Woolford 1991), or for WH-movement. The following IP structure is therefore proposed for Kilega; see tree 9a. (Kinyalolo 1991, Koopman and Sportiche 1991).

b. what moves ?

It is hypothesized that in sentences like 1a, repeated here as 10a [bana b-a-kandul-ile tukwe tu-a nyama walubi], the verb moves to Infl, and merges with it through head to head movement (woolford 1991,511). The subject NP* [bana] also moves to Spec IP, and then triggers Spec head agreement. This is shown in 10b (see tree). In object preposing, however, like 8a, the subject NP* does not move. It is the object which is moved to Spec IP. The verb is moved to Infl and merges with it, leaving subject NP* *in situ* (see tree 10c). This is evidence that, in Kilega, it is the verb which moves necessarily. However, when the NP* is occupied by subject marker, the latter must move to Spec IP (where it will merge with V+I).

c. agreement shift

In WH-movement, verb movement can proceed further ie the verb can move to Infl, merge with it and together move to COMP: V moves/adjoins to I and then V+I moves/adjoins to C (Travis 1984, Chomsky 1986, cited by Woolford 1991). WH-movement is posited to be by adjunction. As can be seen on the tree 10d, the WH-word does not have a chance to enter a Spec head relationship with Infl. It moves directly to Spec CP where it will enter a Spec head relationship with the amalgamated V+I (and possibly with NEG and Subject marker). Agreement shift is therefore a result of this process. The subject NP* having been left *in situ* does not have a chance of agreeing with the verb complex.

CONCLUSION

The data above illustrate that KILEGA has movement phenomenon like many other natural languages. In this paper, attention was focused on WH-movement in order to see how it operates.

In Kilega, WH-movement triggers obligatory Subject-Verb inversion in the CP in which the WH-word is moved. The Verb shows agreement with the moved WH-word. When the subject is lexical, the Verb shows agreement with the WH-phrase only. When the subject is non-lexical, the Verb bears the agreement marker of both the WH-word and of the subject NP, and in that order. WH-word moves to the SPEC-CP position, and the Verb to INFL..and then to COMP (if need be) through head to head movement.

Kilega obeys successive cyclic movement. Both V-S and S-V structures are acceptable in all other clauses, except the clause in which the wh-word is moved where inversion is obligatory. The presence of an open complementizer may block successive cyclic movement.

Under the VP-internal Subject Hypothesis, it is argued that in Kilega NP* movement may or may no be needed. When NP* is lexical, movement is not needed. In WH-sentences, lexical NP* does not move. It is inert. Non-lexical NP, however, must move to [SPEC IP]. The verb moves to Infl, and if need be to COMP, through head to head movement. WH-movement is by adjunction, therefore the WH-word will not enter SPEC-head relationship with Infl (and thus will not trigger agreement with it), but with the amalgamated V+I that has moved to COMP and agreement is triggered.

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